



## Mini-Grant Announcement and Application for Initiatives to Build Stronger Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Walk & Bike to School Programs

### Part 1: Overview

The federally-funded Maine Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS) is excited to announce the **2014 Mini-Grant Program for school initiatives this winter and spring that:**

1. **Provide at least one Safe Walking and/or Bicycling Experience** for students in your community (for example: a walk or bike field trip, walk & bike to school events, etc.) These must be documented with date(s), numbers of participants, and at least one photo.
- AND**
2. **Engage in at least one Other (Different) Safe Routes to School Activity** in your community (for example: walkability audit of at least one route to school, mapping safe routes to school, administering a Parent Survey to gauge parental perceptions of walking & biking to school, starting a Safety Patrol, etc.)

**\*\* See *Part 2 - Examples for Proposing Projects* for help defining what your school would like to do. The Application is in Part 3 of this document.**

The Safe Routes to School Program is committed to working with schools and communities to boost the number of students safely walking and bicycling to Maine schools and after-school activities year-round. **SRTS will select up to 20 recipients to receive awards of up to \$250 each.**

### Important Dates

Week of November 11, 2013	Maine SRTS Mini-Grant Announcement
December 20, 2013	Application Deadline
Week of January 6, 2014	Notification of Awards
June 23, 2014	Final Report and Reimbursement Invoices Due to Maine SRTS for Projects

## **Part 2 - Examples for Proposing Projects**

The Maine Safe Routes to School Program seeks mini-grant application proposals that fit a school's identified needs and interests - in addition to our basic program goals to:

- build safe bicycle and pedestrian skills among the state's student population
- encourage active transportation such as walking and bicycling
- make it safer for students to walk and bike to school and after-school activities

In order to identify which goals the school in your community would like to accomplish and determine which corresponding activities to propose, we encourage you to engage a variety of student and adult leaders and look at the possibilities below for ideas about ways in which mini-grant funds can make a difference.

In any of the categories below, **engaging youth to take leadership roles in walk & bike projects leads to the most sustained bicycle and pedestrian culture change.** You can view [this sixty minute webinar on Engaging Youth in Your Safe Routes to School Program](#) to hear how **students are increasingly providing the impetus for SRTS programs, and learn from examples of successful youth engagement** among National Center for Safe Routes to School mini-grant recipients. Talk with us to learn more, too! Also, using students' service-learning projects or community service requirements can be additional ways to engage students in safe walking/bicycling activities while benefitting the broader school community.

**For more information about any of these ideas or help thinking through your proposal please contact Maine SRTS Staff:** [Darcy Whittemore \(e-mail\)](#), 623-4511 or [Sarah Cushman \(e-mail\)](#) (York & Cumberland Counties), 841-7186. And to be clear, these ideas are only examples; we also love to see new ideas, community-specific needs, and different interests!

### **A. Examples of Safe Walking and Bicycling Experiences that are eligible for a Maine Safe Routes to School Mini-Grant:**

- **Walk & Bike to School Events and/or Contests** – Options include campaigns like, “Walk & Wheel Wednesdays”, “Walk Across \_\_\_\_\_”, Park ‘N’ Walks, Walk and Meet Celebrity Crossing Guards, etc. Check out this [2012 Maine SRTS Mini-Grant Success Report](#) highlighting many walk and bike to school events. For guidance on organizing similar events, use the [Walk and Bike to School Events Description and Checklist](#) and the [Bike Train Guide](#). And make sure to plan events this spring for Maine Walk and Bike to Month (May) and National Bike to School Day ([May 7 - more details will be posted here](#)). Also, [please register your event\(s\) with the Maine SRTS program](#) to enter to win fun safety gear and also to order free event materials. For contests, the community could also solicit donations for larger prizes like bikes and other sports equipment, etc. The top participating students/homerooms could win a special prize. Students can have “passports” stamped or Frequent Walker/Rider cards punched.
- **Walk and/or Bicycling Field Trips** - these save money, build community connections, and are lots of fun! ([See Monmouth Bike Trek example.](#))

- **Pedestrian and Bike Riding Practice and Education During PE Class** - The in-class curriculum is specifically geared toward 3<sup>rd</sup>-8th grade students. Some physical education programs organize [trained Bicycle Coalition/MaineDOT instructors to come in to do this work](#), other times it is done by trained PE staff. [See this BCM newsletter article for more info \(page 3 of this link\)](#). Students can learn and use pedestrian smarts on neighborhood walks and trail hikes; they can bring bikes and/or bikes can be rented or purchased and used by the program, which offers a great way to maintain and build biking skills over the long-term ([see this article on Kennebunk's program](#)). Check out the informative [Be a Safe Walker](#) and [Be a Safe Bike Driver](#) handouts for students (and you can request copies from the Bicycle Coalition/MaineDOT as well). Some schools have rented mountain bikes & helmets from [the Healthy Hometowns Equipment Rental Program](#).
- **Six-Week Youth Bike Clubs** – The Bicycle Coalition of Maine/MaineDOT works with schools and other agencies to organize free after-school bicycle clubs. The clubs meet weekly for six sessions. They teach students effective and safe bicycling techniques for driving with confidence on public roads and local trails and they promote bicycling for fun and good health.
- **Daily, Weekly, or Monthly Walking School Buses and/or Bike Trains** - Bring walkers and bikers of various ages and skill levels to school under adult supervision. *Contact the Safe Routes to School for nuts and bolts materials to assist with the planning and implementation of Walking School Buses and Bike Trains (see also the [Bike Train Guide](#)) - and [see this daily walking school bus example from Portland](#).*
- **Bike-Pedestrian Safety Rodeo** – Start with interested parents for best success. An alternative is to hold the rodeo during the school day to reach every student, not just the families who might be most motivated to attend. Students can practice their bike driving on a life-like skills course; others can practice pedestrian skills on a hike on or near school grounds. Loaner bikes and helmets can sometimes be made available.
- [Insert your great idea here]

## ***B. Examples of Other (Different) Safe Routes to School Activities that are eligible for a Maine Safe Routes to School Mini-Grant:***

When thinking about what to propose, it may be helpful to answer the following question:

**At this school, we want to:**

**Improve safety.** *Examples of Safe Routes Activities are:*

- Start a **student safety patrol or club**. Student safety patrols enhance enforcement of drop-off and pick-up procedures at school by increasing safety for students and traffic flow efficiency for parents. Such efforts allow students to participate in promoting traffic safety where they learn skills they can use in their everyday lives. Having a student safety patrol program at a school requires approval by the school and a committed teacher or parent volunteer to coordinate the student trainings and patrols. ([See example from Houlton.](#))

- Offer **incentives to walkers and bike drivers who are following the rules** and driving safely.
- Work with students, parents and advocates, school staff, crossing guards, and local law enforcement to **increase safe driving in school zones and neighborhoods** by addressing issues that could include reducing speeding, cell phone usage, texting, etc. See the [National SRTS Law Enforcement site](#) for more information and resources. Also, contact Maine Safe Routes to School about possible funding of law enforcement equipment used primarily to improve safety for students walking and biking to school.
- Provide no-cost age-appropriate **walking/bicycling safety education**, including hands-on and/or classroom activities ([See Maine Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program](#)).
- Work with students, school staff, and local officials to **evaluate and improve unappealing and/or unsafe routes to school**, which can address student and parental concerns about personal safety and security. Consider arranging for a site visit with Safe Routes to School Program and the MaineDOT Bike-Pedestrian Coordinator to look at possibilities for infrastructure improvements and traffic calming in the area. Visits are generally scheduled 6-8 weeks ahead. Your community would also need to invite someone from the local regional planning organization (if applicable), and local public works, law enforcement, planning, and city officials.
- [Insert your great idea here]

**Increase the number of students walking and bicycling to school.** *Examples of Safe Routes Activities are:*

- Encourage peers and parents to find opportunities to walk or bicycle. Some examples include youth-led **social marketing campaigns, youth "buddy" teaching, multi-week or year-long challenges**, and classroom and family discussions about transportation choices - to ultimately make walking and bicycling promotion part of the fabric of the school community.
- [Conduct a School Travel Tally](#): We strongly recommend utilizing the show-of-hands [Student Travel Tally](#) during morning attendance – a number of communities have found that it's quick, easy, can be part of engaging students & their curriculum, starts a larger conversation about walking and biking, and provides the most accurate data regarding how students get to school. We can also assist you with how to do this.
- [Conduct a Parent Survey](#): These can be printed, distributed, gathered and submitted via mail to the National Center for Safe Routes to School – which will scan and return the data to the school in a final report form. They can be helpful tools for gathering broad input on how students get to school and parents concerns & interests. Surveys can also help with raising awareness and with the question of how to best reach out to parents to encourage them to find ways for their kids to walk and bike to school. Maine SRTS staff can assist with several fun, effective strategies that have been used elsewhere to boost the return rate of the surveys.
- **Engage students with disabilities** by identifying and taking steps to resolve safe walking/bicycling accessibility issues.
- Start a **walking school bus**, [bicycle train](#), and/or a **"Walking Buddies"** program.

- Use student-generated ideas about safe walking/bicycling to produce **student-led signage, lawn signs, brochures, school assembly, radio show, dramatic production/play, or a Public Service Announcement** style video for viral distribution.
- Purchase a (or an additional) **bike rack** for use at the school. Consider providing a bike lock "library" for students who don't have locks, if needed.
- [Insert your great idea here]

**Emphasize physical activity and health.** *Examples of Safe Routes Activities are:*

- Integrate safe walking and bicycling into the school's broader **5210 Goes to School, Maine-ly Nutrition/Take Time, Fuel Up to Play 60, or Let's Move** initiative.
- Connect the choice to walk/bicycle as a life skill for better health. Consider adding [bicycle and pedestrian safety education](#) to the PE or Health curriculum 1-2 times per year.
- Organize a **walking and/or bicycling field trip** - these save money and build community connections. ([See Monmouth Bike Trek example.](#))
- Organize groups of students to **walk or bicycle together as part of an After-School Club.** ([See Maine Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program.](#))
- **Track student walking mileage via pedometers and via online mileage calculators.** [iSchoolTravel](#), an initiative of the [Hub for Active School Travel](#), has a **new to-and-from school travel calculator** that makes it easy for students, teachers, and school administrators to calculate their distance to and from school, then determine calories burned, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and fuel costs based on their mode of travel. In addition, school communities can set different travel goals and compare the different caloric, GHG and financial outcomes. The calculator is free to use for anyone either on the iSchoolTravel website or as a free [iPad application](#).
- Set up a **Safe Routes to School or Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee within the school's Parent-Teacher Organization**, with an ongoing walk and bike activities work plan and designated budget line item.
- [Insert your great idea here]

**Explore environmental concerns.** *Examples of Safe Routes Activities are:*

- Connect the **choice to walk/bicycle with helping the environment in general.** Alternate transportation – such as walking and biking – can be studied from various perspectives: environmental, health, economic, engineering, social studies, etc. [See curricular units at the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association.](#)
- Consider **walking or bicycling field trips** - these save money and build community connections. ([See Monmouth Bike Trek example.](#))
- Study and **measure school traffic patterns on Walk and Bike to School days versus non-Walk and Bike days.** [See webinar on SRTS and Traffic Reduction here.](#)
- Explore the **connection between active transportation and air quality.** Some example activities include implementing car-free Wednesdays, starting a “No Idling” campaign, demonstrating the difference between air quality emissions in the drop-off line versus a non-motor vehicle area, etc.

- Track student **walking mileage via pedometers and/or via online mileage calculators.** [iSchoolTravel](#), an initiative of the [Hub for Active School Travel](#), has a **new to-and-from school travel calculator** that makes it easy for students, teachers, and school administrators to calculate their distance to and from school, then determine greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, fuel costs, and calories burned based on their mode of travel. In addition, school communities can set different travel goals and compare the different GHG, financial and caloric outcomes. The calculator is free to use for anyone either on the iSchoolTravel website or as a free [iPad application](#).
- [Insert your great idea here]

**Contribute to an overall positive learning environment.** *Examples of Safe Routes Activities are:*

- Contribute to students' readiness to learn by **tracking rates of absenteeism, tardiness, and/or in-school behavior in conjunction with active transportation to school.** Some example activities include tracking absenteeism/tardiness/test scores on walk-to-school days versus regular school days; working with students to connect in-school behavior and/or grades with opportunity to participate in after-school walking/bicycling club, ability to earn helmet/bicycle parts/bicycle, etc.
- Collaborate with teachers to **integrate walking and bicycling into the general curriculum** (math, social studies, English, science, etc.). [See curricular units at the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association.](#)
- Evaluate and **update current school guidelines & policies for walking and bicycling to school.** Develop and/or promote school or district policies which are supportive of safe walking and bicycling to school. *To address wellness and academic performance, the Portland Public School District recently adopted the first known Walk and Bike to School policy in the state - contact Maine SRTS staff to learn more and for technical assistance.*
- [Insert your great idea here]

**Participate in civic work to improve safe walking and bicycling for our students.** *Examples of Safe Routes Activities are:*

- **Interact with local officials regarding safety concerns via presentations, letters, videos,** etc.
- Conduct **walkability and/or bikeability audits & mapping of safest routes.** These can be done with students and offer a great mapping and assessment activity. Schools can then decide which routes they would most like students to use and offer a map of suggested routes and even put up signage along the routes. For examples, [South Portland](#), [Sanford](#) and Portland have worked on different mapping and signage projects. See [Walkability Audit Checklist](#) and [Bikeability Audit Checklist](#) to get started. Contact Maine SRTS staff regarding Yarmouth's OpenStreetMaps project and also Video Voice mapping projects.
- Make a significant **contribution of student and school information to a local Bicycle and Pedestrian planning process.**



- Advocate for and **assist your municipality to seek solutions for physical infrastructure safety needs** such as the construction of sidewalks and bike-pedestrian pathways, improved crossings, bike lanes, and traffic calming elements. Arrange for a site visit with the Safe Routes to School Program and the MaineDOT Bike-Pedestrian Coordinator to look at possibilities for infrastructure improvements and traffic calming in the area. Visits are generally scheduled 6-8 weeks ahead. Your community would also need to invite someone from the local regional planning organization (if applicable), and local public works, law enforcement, planning, and city officials.
- [Insert your great idea here]

### **C. Examples of Possible Budget Items (not limited to the following, but must be approved by Maine SRTS)**

- Reflective or other high-visibility incentives and/or raffle items for clothing, backpacks, etc. to increase safety (ankle or arm bands, blinky lights, bike lights, flashlights - LED keychain style, spoke ornaments, zipper pulls, shoe lace reflectors, etc.)
- General incentives with a bicycle and/or pedestrian safety message (t-shirts, bike or pedestrian pins, footprint pins, coloring books, Safe Routes to School Pencils with bright colors, wrist bands, water bottles, helmet or other stickers, spoke ornaments).
- Raffle prize or high participation award items with a bicycle and/or pedestrian theme and/or safety message (shirts, ankle or wrist bands, water bottles, pedometers, locks, bells, sneakers, and/or up to 10 helmets for prizes). (*Please note: [See here for more information and to apply for up to 35 helmets from the Maine Bicycle Helmet Program](#), provided through the Maine Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Education Program.*)
- Materials for frequent walkers/bikers:
  - Punch cards to be redeemed for incentives (punch card holder/pocket or laminated cards)
  - Passport booklet to be stamped
  - Raffle tickets
  - Colorful footprint or bike hand stamp (to use with multiple participants)
- Safety patrol equipment and/or safety equipment for volunteers (e.g., Student Safety Patrol and/or Crossing guard vests and flags; safety vests for leaders of Bike Trains, Walking School Buses or Walk/Bike Field Trips)
- Materials and costs for safety signage and other safety media (e.g., walk to school banners, posters, lawn and other signs, safety brochures, PSA's, etc.)
- Rented, new or recycled bicycles for general use by school (e.g., school bike fleets, classes and/or activities).
- Bicycle racks – *Please contact SRTS staff for best rack selection and purchasing guidance.*
- Material costs for general awards to highest participating classrooms (e.g., Golden Sneaker and/or Golden Bike award)
- Printing and other material costs for pedestrian and bicycle safety assessments, surveys, mapping and other evaluation tools.
- SRTS Mascot costume with connection to particular school community.

Safe Routes to School funds ***cannot be used for stipends for volunteers or to obtain food and drink***; Maine SRTS recommends communities seek local donations for stipends, food and beverages for SRTS activities.

### ***Part 3 – The Application***

This year the 2014 Maine Safe Routes to School Mini-Grant Application is online – [please click here to review the application and apply](#). When you submit your application, you will receive a confirmation e-mail with a copy of your application for your records.